

Hopewell Academy

HABS No. PA-1311

North side of Hopewell Road (LR 15005), at junction
with Lower Hopewell Road, .7 mile west of U.S. Route 1
Hopewell (East Nottingham Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS,
PA,
IS-HOPE,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1311

HOPEWELL ACADEMY

Location: North side of Hopewell Road (LR 15005), at junction with Lower Hopewell Road, .7 mile west of U.S. Route 1, Hopewell (East Nottingham Township), Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner and Occupant: Harold C. Swisher, R.D. 2, Oxford, Pennsylvania.

Present Use: Residence.

Statement of Significance: This early 19th century brick building was used as a male Academy for over 50 years. The woodwork is an interesting and rich example of vernacular carving of the time.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1815-1820.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands:

1828 Deed July 11, 1828 recorded in Book A4, page 579
39 acres 3 roods 30 perches
James Ramsey and Robert Ramsey executors of the will
of William Ramsey
to
David Dickey and his heirs

1839 Deed Feb. 21, 1839 recorded in Book V4, page 399
184 acres 2 rood 12 perches for \$4,700
Jesse C. Dickey and wife Margaret; Dr. George T. Dare
and wife Mary and Mary Kennedy as heirs of law of
Colonel David Dickey
to
Thomas S. Dickey

1846 Deed June 26, 1846 recorded in Book E5, page 530
19 acres for \$2,500
Thomas S. Dickey and wife
to
Jesse C. Dickey

- 1852 Deed Jan. 24, 1852 recorded in Book S5, page 380
4 acres for \$2,000
Jesse C. Dickey and wife Margaret
to
Rev. John M. Dickey and Samuel Dickey
- 1864 Deed Sept. 14, 1864 recorded in Book Z6, page 76
4 acres for \$2,100
Rev. John M. Dickey and wife Sarah and Jesse C.
Dickey and wife Elizabeth by their attorney in
fact J. Smith Futhey
to
James Robinson
- 1874 Deed April 1, 1874 recorded in Book M8, page 53
William A. Long executor of will of James Robinson
to
Henry Cope and Josiah Cope
- 1898 Deed April 23, 1893 recorded in Book W11, page 463
Henry Cope and Josiah Cope executors of the will of
James Davis
to
James P. Bunting
- 1937 Deed May 25, 1937 recorded in Book M19, page 104
Thomas Robert executor of will of James P. Bunting
to
James D. Bunting and Rhoda K. Bunting
- 1938 Deed April 20, 1938 recorded in Book V19, page 229
5 acres 60 perches for \$3,500.00
James D. Bunting and Rhoda K. Bunting
to
Carlo and Mary Bocciarelli
- 1948 Deed April 19, 1948 recorded in Book G23, page 72
Mary R. Bocciarelli, Carlo Bocciarelli and Margaret B.
Bocciarelli
to
Mary R. Bocciarelli
- 1950 Deed Nov. 3, 1950 recorded in Book N25, page 293
5 acres for \$4,500.00
Mary R. Bocciarelli
to
Martha Collins Foster

1961 Deed Sept. 14, 1961 recorded in Book L33, page 535
5 acres and 69 perches for \$5,000.00
Albert G. Cedarstrom and his wife Martha Collins
Foster Cedarstrom

to
Richard M. Wheeler and Jean G. Wheeler

1964 Deed July 24, 1964 recorded in Book W35, page 890
5 acres and 69 perches for \$13,500.00
Jean G. Wheeler

to
Harold C. Swisher and Barbara H. Swisher

4. Alterations and additions: It is believed that the Academy originally was a two-story building with an ell to the north. The third floor was added around 1851 when the Academy became the Hopewell Classical and Mercantile School. Also circa 1851 the building had two wings added to it, one to the east of the main block and one to the north elevation of the ell. These wings were used for classrooms and probably removed when the school was sold in 1862 to a private owner. Foundations for one of the wings were found by the present owner. The north ell of the house was extensively remodeled in the mid-1960's. A flight of steps between the dining room and kitchen were removed, a bath was added above the kitchen and an upstairs room was made into two rooms. The house has had various porches on the south facade, one of them Classical Revival. Recently, the brick work on the house has been repaired and because of extensive damage the east and north elevation walls have been stuccoed. The roof was replaced in 1963.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Tradition has it that the Hopewell Academy was built circa 1815-1820 by William Ramsey and operated by Ebenezer Dickey and a board of trustees. It has also been suggested that the structure was built as a house and Colonel David Dickey lived there until it was converted to an academy in 1846 by Jessie Dickey. The history of the structure for the next years, that is, until 1848, is made somewhat unclear by the fact that another school also called the Hopewell Academy was founded circa 1834 and closed around 1841. This school, run by Thompson Hudson and attended by various members of the Dickey family, stands today, less than a mile, from the building with which this report is concerned.

Ebenezer Dickey was the father of John Miller Dickey who attended Hopewell Academy and founded Lincoln University in 1854, the first liberal arts college for blacks.

By 1848 the Academy, whose earlier teachers included David Kirkpatrick, George Junkin (founder of Lafayette College and president of Washington and Lee College) and George Dare, was being run by Jesse Dickey, according to a newspaper advertisement of the day. From 1851 until 1862 when the school closed it was a

male boarding school known as the Hopewell Classical and Mercantile School. It was run by various members of the Dickey family, Samuel and John Miller Dickey among them.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Several photographs showing the exterior and interior of the house circa 1938 are in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The present owner has an 1891 photograph showing the south elevation of the house.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Clipping and manuscript files in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania, under the headings: "Dickey, Ebenezer," "Dickey, Jesse," etc., "Hopewell--Private Schools," "Hopewell Cotton Works," "East Nottingham Township--Private Schools," "Lower Oxford Township--Private Schools," etc.

Corporation and property deeds in the Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Old Road Records in the Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

- b. Secondary and published sources:

Carr, George B. John Miller Dickey, D.D.: His Life and Times. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1929.

Cope, Gilbert, and Ashmead, H. G. Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Chester and Delaware Counties. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1904.

Futhey, James, and Cope, Gilbert. History of Chester County. Philadelphia: 1881.

Heathcote, C. W. History of Chester County. Harrisburg: National Historical Association Incorporated, 1932.

W.P.A. project, Baltimore Pike.

3. Likely sources not yet investigated: Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

D. Supplemental Material:

1. Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 24, 1848:

"Hopewell Academy

"The Winter session of this Institution will commence on the first Tuesday of November next. TERMS--Boarding, Tuition, fuel and light for a session of 21 weeks, \$55.00. Washing, 2 cents an article. Vocal and Instrumental Music will be taught by careful and competent teachers, at an additional expense of \$10.00. Students from a distance will board with the principal. T. Hempstead, A.B., a gentleman of high literary attainments and much experience in teaching is connected with the institution. JESSE C. DICKEY, Principal October 24, 1848."

2. Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, April 8, 1851:

"Hopewell Academy

"The Tenth Session of this Institution will commence on the first TUESDAY OF MAY next. The courses of instruction in the Greek and Latin Languages, Mathematics, Sciences and Primary English Branches, is thorough.

"Terms for Summer Session of five months, \$50.00, for boarding and tuition; one half in advance.

"Catalogues, containing names and residences of pupils that have attended the Academy at any time during the last three years, with references and particulars, can be attained by addressing the Principal, JOHN M. DICKEY, Hopewell Cotton Works, Chester county, Pa."

3. Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 21, 1851 [From this advertisement and letter appearing in a local newspaper, we learn of the change in the name of the school and the additions being made to the building at the time]:

"Classical and Mercantile School
AT HOPEWELL

"THIS Institution is situated in the village of Hopewell, Chester county, Pa. The location is pleasant, healthful and retired, in the midst of a moral and intelligent community, and consequently free from the confinement and temptations to evil, incident to large towns.

"The buildings, originally large and commodious, have lately been improved by the addition of spacious school and recitation rooms. They have also been furnished anew by

the present Principal.

"The object of the school is to prepare boys to enter any class in College, or to fit them practically for commercial or other avocations in life. The course of study embraces all the branches that enter into a thorough Classical or English education, together with instruction in the French language, and vocal and instrumental music.

"The Principal, his Lady, and the Assistant Teachers, devote their whole time to the interests of the School, and spare no pains to make it accomplish all the desirable objects of an institution of its kind. It is their aim, while storing the mind with useful knowledge, and preparing it by a harmonious development of all its facilities to think for itself, to endeavor also to instill correct principles of action, to cultivate the moral feelings, and to promote physical strength and symmetry. They hope by a careful attention to all the real wants of the pupil, to make their family his home.

"Government is sustained by appealing to the moral sentiments and natural self-respect of the pupil. Corporeal punishment is not inflicted except in cases of extreme necessity.

"The year is divided into two sessions, each of five months. The Summer session commences on the first Wednesday of May; the Winter session on the first Wednesday of November.

"It is desirable that all pupils be present at the commencement of the session; but they will be received at any period of its continuance, and changed accordingly. No deduction of expenses is made for any absence during term time, except such as may be caused by sickness.

"Each pupil must be provided with over-shoes, slippers and an umbrella. All articles of clothing must be marked with the full name.

"The Institution is provided with a good library and extensive Philosophical and Chemical Apparatus.

"Other information may be obtained by addressing, post paid, Rev. J. M. Dickey, D.D., Oxford, Hon. Jesse C. Dickey, New London, Sam. Dickey, Esq., or the Principal at Hopewell.

"JAS. T. DORAN, A.M., Principal"

"Washington College

Lexington, Va. Aug. 3, 1851

"Mr. Jas. T. Doran, Dear Sir:-I am happy to learn that you are about to take charge of the Hopewell Academy. I have many friends in that region, to whom I cordially recommend you as a well trained scholar, with the full confidence that, if your diligence as a teacher shall continue as when you were a student under my care in classes of lovely La Fayette, they will not be disappointed in the hope of a thorough training of their sons in the elements of a sound

education.

"Very respectfully, your friend,

"GEORGE JUNKIN"

4. Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 21, 1862:

"Assignees' Sale of Sam'l J. Dickey & E. J. Dickey's Valuable Real Estate. WILL be sold at public sale, in the Borough of Hopewell, Chester county, ON TUESDAY, THE 18th November 1862 By the subscribers, to whom have been assigned all the Real and Personal Estate of SAMUEL J. DICKEY and EBENEZER J. DICKEY, of the aforesaid Borough of Hopewell, Chester County, in trust for the benefit of their creditors, the following described Real Estate:...

"No 17. One-third interest in the HOPEWELL ACADEMY, with about 4 acres of land attached there to. The Academy building is of brick, covered with slate and tin, having two fronts of 18 feet each. It is 3 stories high--the first having 6 rooms, the second 8, and third 12 lodging rooms, there being accommodations for ... forty boarders. The building is handsomely situated on an eminence, with a handsome and spacious yard in front. There is also a small stable on the lot, a good wood shed, and a number of fruit trees, also a good well of water, with pump in it near the door. This property is a very desirable one either for the use of an academy or for a handsome residence for a person of leisure. The owners of the two-thirds of the same will unite in the sale, so that it can be sold as a whole.

"Further description is deemed unnecessary, as persons wishing to purchase will view for themselves which they can do by calling on SAMUEL J. DICKEY or EBENEZER J. DICKEY, at Hopewell. Sale to commence at 12 o'clock on the date mentioned, and to continue on the following day. Terms made known at sale.

"GEORGE BRINTON,

"JAMES R. RAMSEY,

"Assignees of Samuel J. Dickey and Ebenezer J. Dickey."

5. Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1864:

"Academy for Sale,

"IN HOPEWELL BOROUGH, CHESTER COUNTY, ONE and a half miles from Oxford Station, on the Phila. & Baltimore Central Rail-Road. BUILDING of Brick, three stories high, two fronts of eighty feet each, stands on a fine elevation surrounded by shade Trees. Now occupied by a Classical School. Might be used to advantage as a SUMMER BOARDING HOUSE.

"It will be sold at Public Sale on WEDNESDAY, the 2d of

MARCH, at 1 o'clock P.M., in OXFORD. The property will positively be sold, as the owners have removed. Possession given on the 1st of April.

"Apply [not by letter,] to PUSEY J. NICHOLS, Oxford, Chester county, Pa., or to J. SMITH FUTHEY, West Chester, Pa.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This three-story brick building has two principal facades, the south and west elevations being almost identical. The exterior doorways and doors and the mantels are decorated with unusual examples of vernacular carving.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The L-shaped structure measures approximately 50' across the almost identical five-bay south and west facades. The south portion is 20' deep and the west portion is 18' deep. The structure has three stories and a basement.
2. Foundations: Random rubble, slightly above grade.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Walls are of brick laid in Flemish bond; the east elevation of the main block and the north elevation of the ell have been stuccoed. Much of the brick work was repaired in the 1960's.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Circa 1965 brick stoops consisting of three semicircular steps were constructed leading to the south and west entrances. A modern bulkhead containing the basement steps is located on the east elevation of the main block.
5. Chimneys: There are three brick inside-end chimneys on the house, two on the main block and one on the north elevation of the ell.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorways and doors on the south and west elevations are identical in design and material. The six-paneled door is surrounded by a door frame decorated in a heavy vernacular style of the Federal period which includes patera and rosettes and gouge work

carving. The gouge work on the panels flanking the sidelights gives a kind of beaded effect. The reveal of the doorway and the lintel display gouge work, patera and rosette designs. Above the lintel is a fanlight consisting of 22 lights, bordered by a band of gouge work and a keystone. Above the fanlight is a brick border of headers.

- b. Windows and shutters: Windows on the first and second floors of the house are six-over-six-light double-hung wooden sash. Those on the third floor are three-over-three-light double-hung wooden sash. A flat brick arch crowns each window on the south and west facade. The windows on the basement story are not centered to the pattern of fenestration, and may have been later additions.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof, replaced in 1963, is a very low pitched gable roof, almost flat. The shingles were originally slate; now they are asbestos.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A narrow, flat wooden cornice. All of it was replaced in 1963 when the roof was replaced.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Full basement with a cement floor.
- b. First floor: A central hall runs north to south through the main block with the principal entrance on the south facade. On the west of the center hall are three rooms, a sitting room, dining room and behind it a kitchen in the ell. The west entrance opens directly into the dining room. One room, a large living room, is to the east of the center hall. All of the rooms on the first floor have fireplaces.
- c. Second floor: The plan is similar to that of the first floor. Three of the rooms have fireplaces. The present owner has added a bath and divided one room into two in the northwest wing.
- d. Third floor (attic): Now an open attic, this space was once partitioned off as dormitory space for the academy.

2. Stairways: The original U-shaped stairway in the center hall has two landings before it reaches the second floor. The poplar railing is one piece of wood until it reaches the first landing. It is an open-string stair with no brackets, plain balusters and a handrail. A single flight of steps enclosed between walls runs up to the attic.
3. Flooring: Most of the wide board floors in the house are original.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Paint over plaster. Original molded baseboard and chair rail remain in most rooms.
5. Doorways and doors: The original doors remain; they are six-paneled with architrave trim.
6. Special decorative features, trim, cabinet work: A two-door wooden cabinet with three panels in the upper door and two panels in the lower door is built into the south wall of the dining room (southwest room, first floor). Mantelpieces in the southeast room, first floor (living room) and southeast room, second floor (bedroom) are carved in heavy vernacular style including gouge work, patera and rosette decoration. Mantels in the sitting room and dining room display similar gouge work techniques but have no patera or rosette. The dining room and sitting room fireplaces have curious little iron doors 2" square above the mantelpiece. The openings which they cover penetrate the chimney breast.
7. Hardware: Brass hardware on doors is old but not original to the house.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Central electric heating. All of the rooms have fireplaces. The kitchen fireplace has a Franklin stove in it.
 - b. Lighting: Electric.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south on the top of a hill. It is surrounded by 5 acres which include an orchard. The property is located in two Townships since the line separating Lower Oxford and East Nottingham townships runs through the middle of it.
2. Outbuildings: The owners are building a garage to the north of the house.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperative survey of 100 Chester County buildings conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Chester County Historical Society between 1958 and 1962. This was the first large-scale project undertaken after the reinstitution of HABS in 1957, and it established the pattern of cooperation with state and local preservation groups which has characterized the HABS program in recent years. Written data was prepared by Bart Anderson, Curator of the Chester County Historical Society, with the assistance of Jim Sorber and others. HABS hired local professional photographer Ned Goode to take the documentary photographs. The written material was edited and expanded in 1975 by Marion Morton working under contract with HABS.